

Top Secret

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Saturday 4 February 1978

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Saturday, 4 February 1978.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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GHANA: Referendum Politicking

25X1 [] *Politicking in Ghana is intensifying in preparation for a national referendum scheduled for 30 March to determine Supreme Military Council Chairman Acheampong's proposal for a nonparty "union" form of government. His opponents face a difficult fight.*

25X1 [] The referendum is an outgrowth of Acheampong's promise to restore constitutional rule by July 1979 that he made last summer in response to antigovernment demonstrations by student and professional groups. In recent months, Acheampong has been campaigning for approval of the union government which he hopes to lead as its elected president. Numerous pro-Acheampong front groups have sprung up--with considerable backing from the regime--to support union government.

25X1 [] Anti-Acheampong forces late last month made their first determined bid to oppose the union government by organizing a group called the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice. It represents the followers of several well-known, old-line politicians and includes prestigious retired General Afrifa, who headed the military regime that overthrew President Nkrumah in 1966.

25X1 [] The group could become a magnet for broader opposition. Acheampong and his lackluster military regime remain highly unpopular with student and professional groups, and the momentum toward union government thus far has been largely because of the absence of an alternative, the disunity of opposition forces, and widespread popular apathy.

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[] Acheampong has the government media at his disposal, and has not hesitated to use police and goon squads to disrupt opposition rallies. He can still count on the support of the armed forces, trade unions, most traditional chiefs, and many leftist politicians from Nkrumah's old party. These groups back union government, despite Acheampong's unpopularity, in hopes of gaining their share of spoils in a future government.

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CHAD: Situation Report

[] *the besieged government garrison at Faya-Largeau in northern Chad is in imminent danger of being overrun by Libyan-supplied Tou-bou rebels even though the Chadians were able to make an emergency airdrop of ammunition yesterday.*//

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[] The French have informed the US Embassy in Paris that the rebels have breached the Chadian defenses at Faya-Largeau and captured a portion of the airstrip. Around 1,200 Chadians are defending against an unknown number of rebels. The rebels have recoilless rifles, AK-47 rifles, heavy machine-guns, and light vehicles. The French say they can confirm that the rebels used surface-to-air missiles to down two Chadian aircraft last weekend.

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[] The French are disappointed over what they consider the poor performance of the Chadian defenders. They say the Chadians fear the rebels and have not used the tactics the French taught them.

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[] The French have flown a high-level military team to Ndjamea and are airlifting infantry weapons and light armored cars to Chad for use by relief forces that are moving north to the garrison. An unspecified number of the 300 French military advisers in Chad are accompanying the relief column. The force cannot reach Faya-Largeau for several days. The French believe that if the garrison holds out until relief arrives the siege can be broken.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] //Should Faya-Largeau fall, the government will be forced to withdraw its forces from the two remaining outposts in the north and leave the entire region under rebel control. This development might in the short run encourage rebel groups in eastern Chad to step up dissident activity, which so far has been minor. Government reconciliation efforts with one rebel leader in the east could be frustrated.//

[REDACTED] //While the threat of the insurgency has so far kept Chad's ruling military council pulling together, its unity is fragile. The loss of Faya-Largeau could increase backbiting and dissension among members, and possibly threaten President Malloum's position.// [REDACTED]

ROMANIA: Ethnic Problems

[REDACTED] *The publication in the Western media of a letter accusing the Romanian Government of mistreating its large ethnic Hungarian community is a serious setback to Romanian efforts to play down its minority problem. The allegation of gross discrimination further tarnishes the regime's human rights record at a time when the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is meeting in Belgrade.*

25X1 [] It also embarrasses Romanian President Ceausescu, who is scheduled to visit the US and Western Europe this spring. Ceausescu had been hoping to get the US to act favorably on a multiyear extension of most-favored-nation treatment.

25X1 [] Allegedly written by a former Romanian party functionary of ethnic Hungarian background, the letter asserts that the government has tried forcibly to assimilate the Magyar minority, which comprises 8 percent of the population. The letter connects this with mistaken political decisions resulting from the Ceausescu "personality cult."

25X1 [] The wide publicity given the letter may prompt the Romanians to defend publicly their nationality policies. At the same time, Bucharest may feel compelled to detain the author on the charge that he has incited national animosities.

25X1 [] The status of the Magyars in Romania is still an emotional issue with many Hungarians, and it has occasionally hindered bilateral relations between Bucharest and Budapest. The Hungarians have tried to press the Romanians on behalf of the Magyar minority and may derive some advantages from the new publicity on the issue in the West. During talks with Hungarian party leader Kadar last summer Ceausescu agreed to significant concessions facilitating Hungarian contacts with the ethnic Magyar community in Romania. The Romanians have, however, apparently stalled on implementing these agreements.

COSTA RICA: Election Preview

25X1 [] Costa Ricans go to the polls tomorrow to elect a new president, a 57-member legislature, and municipal officials. As usual, the balloting is widely expected to be scrupulously honest. The two presidential front-runners, both middle-of-the-road candidates, are Luis Monge of the governing National Liberation Party and Rodrigo Carazo, who heads the Opposition Unity coalition. It will probably be a close race.

25X1 [] The biggest issue of the campaign has been continuismo-- "four more years" versus "time for a change." Although the National Liberation Party's candidate was reelected in 1974,

that was the first time an incumbent party had won since 1948. Costa Ricans generally believe the best way to keep their government honest and efficient is to throw the "ins" out and let the "outs" in.

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[] Monge is primarily a party man whose main strength is the well-organized, well-financed National Liberation Party. His lack of government experience has caused many Costa Ricans to view him as a political hack despite his carefully cultivated image as a left-of-center progressive. Monge has relied heavily on the government's record, which is generally good, especially in the economic sphere. His party has also promoted a host of far-reaching--and costly--development programs, many of which have benefited the country's rural majority.

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[] Far from opposing the government's economic programs, the opposition coalition has promised to continue them, asserting only that "we can do it better and at less cost." Carazo, the coalition's candidate, is a far more attractive personality than Monge, especially in radio and television appearances. He enjoys substantial support within the business community and has great appeal to city voters because of his attacks on crime and other urban problems. He probably will also do well with the large number of new young voters.

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[] There are almost no differences in the two contenders' foreign policy positions. Both want to continue Costa Rica's present close cooperation with the US.

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[] There are six other candidates; several are extremists of the right or the left, and none has much popular appeal. Our best estimate is that all the minor candidates together will poll less than 20 percent of the vote. If no candidate wins 40 percent of the votes there will have to be a runoff, but this seems unlikely. []

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ECUADOR: Presidential Election

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[] The likelihood that the military will tamper with Ecuador's presidential election next July has increased following the Radical Liberal Party's withdrawal on Monday from a broad-based coalition designed to stop front-running presidential contender Assad Bucaram. The military appears determined to prevent the election of the populist Bucaram, as it did in 1972, because of the threat he poses to the interests of both the military and the oligarchy.

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[] The walkout by the Radical Liberals--the largest party in the 11-member Nationalist Constitutional Front--was triggered by the selection of the Conservative Party's Sixto Duran-Ballen, the mayor of Quito, as the coalition's presidential candidate. Duran-Ballen is widely considered the strongest choice to oppose Bucaram, but Radical Liberal Party Director Francisco Huerta refused to accept second place on the ticket. Huerta evidently believed that with Duran-Ballen as the coalition's standard-bearer, his own party would be seriously weakened because many rank-and-file members would defect to Bucaram.

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[] Huerta told US Embassy officials last week that the Radical Liberals now will attempt to join forces with the Christian Democrats and the Progressive Conservatives in an effort to unite the center-left. He estimated that this group would be able to finish second to Bucaram.

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[] The Radical Liberals' withdrawal appears to have dealt a serious blow to the government's strategy of defeating Bucaram at the ballot box. Top Ecuadorean officials--who for the past month have been giving the coalition behind-the-scenes encouragement and financial support--are now likely to give more active consideration to alternatives.

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[] In a conversation with the US Ambassador on 18 January, President Poveda confided that his government might still attempt to disqualify Bucaram by using a provision in the military code stipulating that a military officer must have native Ecuadorean parents. Following this logic, Poveda said Bucaram's Lebanese parentage would disqualify him since, as president, he would be commander in chief of the armed forces.

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[] //The government may have reserved itself a further option when it reorganized the Supreme Court. []

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[] should Bucaram win in July, the new head of the court--allegedly more tractable than his predecessor--could be prevailed upon to declare the results null and void and ask the armed forces to form a new military government.// []

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BRIEFS



USSR-New Zealand

[[redacted]] //Negotiations between New Zealand and the USSR on Soviet access to fish resources in New Zealand's new 200-mile economic zone are near conclusion.//

[[redacted]] //New Zealand's Prime Minister Muldoon told the press this week that the Soviets had come around to his country's positions on two points not resolved during the first round of talks in December: Soviet recognition of New Zealand's control over two enclaves on the high seas enclosed by the 200-mile line, and recognition of New Zealand's right to declare fishing zones around its Pacific island dependencies. Foreign Ministry officials in New Zealand say the agreement can be concluded between the two governments without a return visit by the Soviet negotiating team. [[redacted]]

El Salvador

[[redacted]] A group of 30 to 40 workers armed with submachine guns and molotov cocktails took over the United Nations Information Center in San Salvador yesterday and is holding seven UN employees hostage. The group probably is affiliated with the leftist Popular Revolutionary Bloc, which forced the government to grant wage increases last November by taking over the

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Ministry of Labor. The UN office director believes the workers have succeeded in getting the publicity they wanted and will soon leave peacefully--assuming that they are allowed to do so by the police, who have the building surrounded. [REDACTED]

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Indonesia

[REDACTED] The Indonesian Government has lifted the ban on four of seven newspapers that were closed two weeks ago for publicizing the activities of dissident students and others opposed to President Suharto's reelection next month. The papers were permitted to reopen only after their editors agreed not to publish any material denigrating the government, its leaders, or their families--an obvious reference to the President's family, which is widely accused of corruption.

[REDACTED] The decision to remove the ban probably stems from Suharto's continuing desire to show firmness without giving the appearance of running an authoritarian regime. The country's largest newspaper has refused thus far to go along with the government's guidelines and remains closed, reducing the impact of the government's gesture. [REDACTED]

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India-Pakistan

[REDACTED] Indian Foreign Minister Vajpayee's three-day visit to Pakistan, which begins on Monday, is the latest of the Desai government's moves to improve relations with India's neighbors. Since coming to office 10 months ago, Prime Minister Desai has succeeded in establishing friendlier ties with Bangladesh and Nepal, and his government has carefully avoided interfering in or publicly commenting on Pakistan's domestic political problems.

[REDACTED] Vajpayee probably will raise the possibility of expanded economic ties--including a regional common market scheme proposed by the Shah of Iran. Pakistan, however, views the visit strictly as a goodwill gesture and does not expect significant new economic ventures as long as India remains unwilling to discuss a final settlement of the 30-year-old Kashmir dispute.

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[redacted] Pakistani leaders--under strong domestic pressure not to make what might appear to be concessions to India--are concerned that the visit could result in a cooling, rather than a warming, of relations. A proposed return visit to India by the head of Pakistan's martial law government, General Zia, will depend on how well the talks go with Vajpayee. [redacted]

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Nicaragua

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[redacted] //Nicaraguan guerrillas, who had been relatively quiet since they staged raids in October, attacked two towns in the southern part of the country early yesterday but were repelled by the National Guard. Although the attacks posed no real threat to the government, they came at a difficult time for President Somoza, who is faced with a general business strike.//

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[redacted] The raids were costly for the Sandinists; nine or more were killed and some of their more advanced weapons were captured. At least six National Guardsmen were also killed in the fighting. The Guard is pursuing the remaining guerrillas as they flee into the mountains and toward the Costa Rican border.

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[redacted] //While the Guard has been relatively restrained in handling a variety of demonstrations since the assassination of journalist Pedro Joaquin Chamorro on 10 January, it will show no such restraint in going after the guerrillas. [redacted]

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Morocco

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[] Moroccan and Soviet officials initialed agreements in Moscow on Friday under which the USSR will provide \$2 billion in credits to help the Moroccans develop the Meskala phosphate deposits over an eight- to 10-year period. The deal provides for the construction of a railroad, road networks, and port, storage, and mining facilities in Morocco.

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[] Moscow will receive 10 million tons of phosphate rock from Meskala annually for 30 years as repayment for the construction loan and as barter for Soviet products.

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[] According to the Moroccan press, the value of trade and credit transactions related to the agreement eventually could rise to as much as \$10 billion. This would move Morocco into first place among the USSR's African trading partners. Phosphate imports will support expansion of the Soviet fertilizer capacity.

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[] Negotiations on the project had dragged on for four years; during the last year Morocco was holding out to get Moscow to refrain from publicly supporting Algeria against Morocco in the Western Sahara dispute. Continuing Soviet neutrality on the issue presumably is a Moroccan condition for finalizing the agreement next month. []

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